

2015-2017 National Survey of Family Growth MALE Questionnaire

Introduction:

The dataset I will be using is from the 2015 to 2017 National Survey of Family Growth from the CDC, specifically their Male Questionnaire data.[1,2,3] The data contains demographic information about the men participating, along with when and where they learned about birth control, if they got a vasectomy and where they had the procedure, how many sexual partners do they have, what is their relationship with said partners, what form of birth control do they use, what form of birth control do their partners use, etc. This dataset also contains information about the family and children living in these men's lives.[1,2,3] However, I am most interested in the use of birth control by men with their partners.

Men only have two options when it comes to birth control: condoms and vasectomies. I am looking at this dataset to get a better understanding of what men in relationships chose to use as a form of birth control. What is great about this survey is that it also asks about the birth control that their partner is using, suggesting that men might just rely on their female partners for contraceptive methods.[2] I am also hoping this dataset will inform me on the situations when men are most likely to get a vasectomy (ie. what is the family dynamic at that time, what is the relationship status, how many children does he have, etc.).

There has been a lot of literature published about how many men have vasectomies and how many men use condoms for birth control.[4] There has even been research conducted to know why men get vasectomies reversed, suggesting that it has to do with how old the man was at the time of the procedure and if he is now divorced. However, while the article also addresses why some of the men chose to have a vasectomy in the first place, the article was published in 1982 and those reason may or may not be valid today.[5] According to a paper from 2016, only 2.4% of men around the world have a vasectomy. The article suggests that the low percentage is due to the misconception of the procedure, lack of encouragement for men to be a part of family planning, and insufficient political and financial support for bringing awareness. Still, this paper doesn't address why the men who have vasectomies elected to get one.[6] I desire to know the psychographics of the men who are willing to be a part of family planning. If they are willing to be a part of family planning now, there is a higher likelihood that they will continue and might be more engaged in family planning in the future if a long-acting reversible contraceptive for men came to market. What I am specifically interested in is seeing if there is a trend in the data to understand why men choose that specific birth control and to see if their partners play a role in their decisions.

In order to best complete my analysis, I will be using the answers from the 2015 to 2017 National Survey of Family Growth Male Questionnaire that best paint the best picture of where this man is in life and how him and his partner made decisions on what contraceptive method(s) to use. Example of questions that collect the data needed for my analysis are questions asking about how the interviewee learned about sex and birth control, where to get birth control, if they have had a vasectomy or other sterilization operations, what their current household looks like (ie. do they have a current wife or cohabiting partner, how many biological and not biological

children do they have, what are his desires and intentions for future children, etc.), and what forms of birth control methods do the interviewee and his partner use to prevent pregnancy. This data was collected through in-person 60 minute interviews under Research Ethics Review Board guidelines. [2]

This information could be very valuable to someone who needs to know men's attitudes toward birth control. This information would be important for someone marketing a new form of birth control to men and knowing which demographic and psychographic group of men to target. With the current contraceptive market being dominated by contraceptive methods for women, companies developing a contraceptive for men will need as much insight as possible to obtain significant market share.

Problems Encountered in the Beginning:

An issue with the data that I have identified is that all of the answers were denoted with a number. There is a questionnaire and user guide that explains what question were asked and what each number indicates as an answer for the specific question. However, when I downloaded the dataset, one column has all the recorded answers in number form.[3] (See picture below to understand what I mean.[3]) In order to work with this dataset, I believe I will have to give each answer its own column, making it easier to sort through the data and answer my questions. I can see that process being long and tedious.

The screenshot shows a data viewer window titled "2015_2017_MaleData 2". The left sidebar shows the file "2015_2017_Male..." and a list of columns with "Column 1" selected. The main area displays a grid of data with 4,539 rows and one column. The data consists of long strings of numbers separated by spaces, representing answers to various questions. The bottom of the window shows a summary of rows: All rows (4,539), Selected (0), Excluded (0), Hidden (0), and Labelled (0).

Row	Column 1
4510	80660536533636365 1 41 11115 19111998 12 142002 255111 41 4 5 15 0 1 1 5 ...
4511	80661124532424245 1 36 50 5 15112009 12 11 5 255111 31 4 5 5 0 0 111 12345681 7111 711 711 711 ...
4512	80662539533939395 1 21 11115 19111995 12 142000 255111 32 4 5 15 0 1 1 5 ...
4513	80663143534343435 1 31 11115 14111992 12 11 11625551213131 4 335 25 0 2 1 5 ...
4514	80665545534646465 1 25 41 5 12111987 12 5 21151221114 2 135 11 7 1 1 7 1 5 ...
4515	80666524532424245 1 36 50 1 17512010 12 5 1925551213121 4 135 5 0 0 111 95 5 11 715 5 1715 5 ...
4516	80667521522121215 1 56 50 1 15112013 12 5 1625555212141 3 235 5 0 0 111 124568 1 9111 911 911 911 ...
4517	80669517531717175 1 46 50 15111 11 16255 5214111 5 435 5 0 0 52 4 6 1 7 5 1 9 1 7 1 8 110 12 9 ...
4518	80671532513232325 1 41 11115 1155 112000 5 255151 21 1 5 15 0 1 1 5 ...
4519	80673127522626265 1 16 50 5 915 92004 11621155212134 4 235 5 0 0 111 5 ...
4520	80676148534949495 1 41 11115 19111986 12 141990 255151 24 4 5 15 0 1 1 5 ...
4521	80677141534141415 1 15 41 5 14111993 12 11 5 255111 41 2 5 11 2 1 1 2 1 5 ...
4522	80680129522929295 1 36 50 5 15112005 12 5 11625551212121 2 235 1 21 0 2 1 5 ...
4523	80686543534343435 1 41 11115 14111989 12 11 5 25551211231 3 135 15 0 1 1 11 2012 ...
4524	80687145524545455 1 16 50 5 1255 129999 11221151213221992435 1 31 0 3 1 5 ...
4525	80689134533434345 1 61 11111 1515 1212200111 17255111 32 3 5 15 0 1 1 5 ...
4526	80691142534242425 1 31 11115 16111991 12 121996 255111 21 4 5 15 0 1 1 5 ...
4527	80692135523535355 1 26 50 5 14111999 12 11 5 21151212141 3 235 1 21 0 2 1 5 ...
4528	80693130533030305 1 16 50 1 19512004 12 5 1925551213141 4 435 1 21 0 2 1 5 ...
4529	80694548534747475 1 22431125 16111986 12 121997 255111 22 3 5 1 1 1 1 1 5 ...
4530	80695125532525255 1 52650125 14112009 12 11 5 25551213122 3 435 11 0 1 1 5 ...
4531	80696529522828285 1 31 11115 1212 122008 116255111 21 3 5 15 0 1 1 5 ...
4532	80700548534848485 1 52431125 1255 121985 5 21151213121 1 231 641 3 1 1 3 1 5 ...
4533	80706124532424245 1 16 50 5 16112011 12 122016 255111 41 4 5 5 0 0 111 8 1 5111 ...
4534	80707144534444445 1 16 50 5 14111989 12 11 5 255111 21 2 5 5 0 0 111 5 ...
4535	80708518521818185 1 36 50 1113112015 12 5 1925551224111 5 435 5 0 0 111 4568 1 9211 925 1 921 921 ...
4536	80709120532020205 1 26 50 5 955 92013 11221151221112 3 135 1 31 0 3 1 6 1 8111 811 811 811 ...
4537	80711135523535355 1 31 11115 12112001 12 5 255151 21 2 5 15 0 1 1 5 ...
4538	80713138523838385 7 41 11115 17112002 12 5 116255111 12 3 5 15 0 1 1 5 ...
4539	80714129512929295 17 21 11115 16112004 12 122008 255111 41 3 5 15 0 1 1 5 ...

REFERENCES:

- [1] User Guide:
https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nsfg/NSFG_2015_2017_UserGuide_MainText.pdf
- [2] Questionnaire: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nsfg/NSFG_2015-2017_MaleCAPlite_forPUF.pdf
- [3] Datasets: ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health_Statistics/NCHS/Datasets/NSFG/
- [4] <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/contraceptive-use-united-states>
- [5] <https://www.bmj.com/content/285/6340/490.abstract>
- [6] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5199180/pdf/647.pdf>